

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 041780

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EUR/EE:WSSHEPARD

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TO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 041780

FOLLOWING REPEAT SAIGON 2445 ACTION USUN INFO WARSAW, SECSTATE,
FEB. 25,

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2445

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR UN PL VS PFOR

SUBJECT: ICCS: IMPRESSIONS OF AMBASSADOR KULAGA

REF: USUN 0549 (NOTAL)

1. AMBASSADOR KULAGA IS AN URBANE, EXTREMELY SMOOTH AND
SOPHISTICATED DIPLOMAT. HE HAS HAD MANY YEARS EXPERIENCE
IN UN AFFAIRS AND IS SKILLED IN DEBATE AND PARLIAMENTARY
TECHNIQUES. HE HAS A FLUENT COMMAND OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND IS A MASTER OF SUBTLETIES. HE IS EQUALLY SKILLED IN FRENCH
AND SPEAKS SOHE VIETNAMESE.

2. KULAGA'S TOUR IN SAIGON WAS INTERRUPTED BY A SERIOUS
HEALTH PROBLEM. REPORTEDLY, KULAGA HAD A HEART ATTACK SOME
YEARS AGO AND BECAUSE OF AN UNSATISFACTORY CARDIOGRAM IN
SAIGON, HE WAS HOSPITALIZED FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS IN NOVEMBER.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 041780

THEREAFTER HE RETURNED TO WARSAW IN DECEMBER FOR SEVERAL

WEEKS OF MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS, HOSPITALIZATION AND A STAY AT A SPA OUTSIDE WARSAW. DURING HIS STAY IN POLAND, HIS WIFE RETURNED FOR A FEW DAYS' VISIT FROM NEW YORK WHERE SHE HAD REMAINED. KULAGA RETURNED TO SAIGON TO TAKE UP HIS ICCS DUTIES IN EARLY JANUARY AND WILL LEAVE AT THE END OF FEBRUARY.

3. FROM THE TIME OF HIS ARRIVAL, KULAGA CONSIDERED HIS SAIGON ASSIGNMENT TEMPORARY AND MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE REMAINED PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED TO THE POLISH MISSION IN NEW YORK. DURING THE TENURE OF HIS PREDECESSOR, WISILEWSKI, THERE WERE STRONG RUMORS OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY SIDES OF THE POLISH DELEGATION AND WASILEWSKI WAS SOMEWHAT OVERSHADOWED BY THE STRONG PERSONALITY OF HIS HUNGARIAN COUNTERPART, ESZTERGALYOS. KULAGA MAY HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY HIS GOVERNMENT FOR HIS PRESTIGE AND PROFESSIONAL STRENGTH TO REDRESS THESE SITUATIONS. GOP MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN RESPONDING TO USG PRESSURE FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE IN ICCS.

4. WITH KULAGA'S ARRIVAL IN SAIGON ONE DAY AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF IRANIAN AMBASSADOR SADRI, THE POLISH DELEGATION IN THE ICCS BECAME IMMEDIATELY MORE FORCEFUL AND ACTIVE. THE IRANIAN AMBASSADOR AND KULAGA DEVELOPED A KIND OF PARTNERSHIP EMPHASIZING PRIOR QTE CONSULTATIONS UNQTE BETWEEN DELEGATION CHIEFS IN ORDER TO REACH UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHERS POSITIONS ON ICCS QUESTIONS BEFORE MEETING EACH OTHER HEAD-ON IN PLENARY SESSIONS. THIS POLICY, OF COURSE, LEFT THE INDONESIAN AND HUNGARIAN DELEGATIONS SOMEWHAT OUTSIDE OF THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WHICH WAS PERHAPS THE DELIBERATE INTENTION OF BOTH KULAGA AND SADRI.

5. IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE WHAT KULAGA'S IMPRESSIONS OF HIS VIETNAM WXPRIENCE ARE. HE IS A MASTER AT CONCEALING HIS OWN FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS. HE UNDOUBTEDLY ORIGINALLY SAW THE ICCS AS AN ORGANIZATION WITH ONLY LIMITED POSSIBILITIES OF ACHIEVING THE HIGH GOALS AND AIMS SET FORTH IN THE PARIS AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, WITHIN ITS LIMITATIONS, AMBASSADOR KULAGA HAS WORKED TOWARD MAKING THE ICCS USEFUL IN COMMUNICATING BETWEEN THE TWO VIETNAMESE SIDES AND TOWARD A LESSENING OF VIOLENCE AND HAS INDICATED TO AMBASSADOR THE ICCS MAY HAVE EVEN MORE USEFUL ROLE IN FUTURE. HE HAS TRIED TO CIRCUMVENT USELESS CONFRONTATION AND DEADLOCK

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 041780

AND FIND WAYS TO MAKE THE ICCS OPERATIVE WHERE IT COULD EXERT A CLAMING INFLUENCE. UNTIL FAIRLY RECENTLY THE POLISH DELEGATION HAS BEEN CLOSER TO THE DRV THAN TO THE PRG; KULAGA PERSONALLY TAKES SOME CREDIT FOR THE ICCS'S RECENT VISIT TO HANOI. HE HAS ALSO, STARTING WITH THE ICCS VISIT TO DONG HA IN NOVEMBER, OPENLY CHALLENGED TO HUNGARIAN CLAIM TO A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRG.

6. WHILE KULAGA HAS OF COURSE BEEN LOYAL TO HIS COMMUNIST FRIENDS, HE HAS BEEN WILLING TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GVN. IN THIS HE HAS CAREFULLY AVOIDED THE DOGMATIC PITFALL HIS HUNGARIAN COLLEAGUES HAVE FALLEN INTO IN REFERRING TO THE GVN AS THE QTE SAIGON AUTHORITIES UNQTE AND REFUSING TO HAVE DIRECT DEALINGS WITH GVN CIVILIAN OFFICIALS. EVIDENCE FOR THIS WAS HIS WILLINGNESS TO INFORM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALLY OF THE PLANNED VISIT TO HANOI AND AN INFORMAL LUNCH HE RECENTLY HOSTED FOR A HIGH-RANKING FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL.

7. KULAGA, EVEN THOUGH HIGHLY INTELLIGENT, PROBABLY ARRIVED IN VIETNAM WITH A CONCEPT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM LARGELY SHADED BY COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA. HE NOW EXPRESSES FRANKLY A MORE BALANCED VIEW OF THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE GVN, ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO THE CAPABILITY OF THE SVN MILITARY. HE HAS OBSERVED THAT THE SPH IS NOT ON THE VERGE OF DISINTEGRATION AND COLLAPSE, AS HE PERHAPS HAD ASSUMED. HE HAS PROBABLY ALSO BEEN CONVINCED THAT THE LVN IS NOT QTE THE PUPPET OF THE AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS UNQTE. PERHAPS AS A RESULT OF THIS, KULAGA HAS INCREASINGLY STRESSED THE NECESSITY OF QTE RECOGNITION UNQTE OF THE PRG AND THE SHIFTING OF THE FUNCTION OF THE ICCS FROM INVESTIGATIONS OF CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS TO QTE BRINGING THE TWO PARTIES TOGETHER UNQTE.

8. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION, KULAGA HAS MENTIONED IN MOST FAVORABLE TERMS HIS PRIOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH MR. BUSH AND OTHER AMERICAN OFFICIAL IN NEW YORK. HE HAS SHOWN A GREAT INTEREST AND CONSIDERABLE BACK-GROUND IN MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS AND SUGGESTED AT ONE TIME THAT HE WAS IN VIETNAM AT THE WRONG TIME BECAUSE OF HIS INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE HAS SHOWN NO RELUCTANCE TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AND HAS ON OCCASION APPEARED TO CULTIVATE THEM BY INCLUDING THEM IN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 041780

OFFICIAL RECEPTIONS.

9. ON BALANCE, AND WITHIN LIMITS OF IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS (MINOR) AND THE OBVIOUS LIMITS IMPOSED BY MOSCOW-WARSAW RELATIONSHIPS, WE BELIEVE KULAGA HAS SINCERELY ATTEMPTED TO BE HELPFUL. CERTAINLY HE HAS BEEN AWARE OF STRAIN ON POLISH-AMERICAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS WHICH COULD DEVOLVE FROM INTRANSIGENT POLISH POSTURE IN ICCS AND HAS TRIED TO KEEP SUCH ISSUES TO MINIMUM. AT ONE POINT HE OBSERVED TO AMBASSADOR THAT REPRESENTATIONS BY WASHINGTON IN MOSCOW MIGHT HAVE MORE EFFECT THAN THOSE MADE IN WARSAW OR BUDAPEST IN ACHIEVING MORE EFFECTIVE ICCS.

10. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM BOTH IN WARSAW AND ON HIS RETURN TO NEW YORK, I WOULD BE COMPLETELY ACCURATE, IF IT

IS CONSIDERED USEFUL, TO MENTION THE HIGH PERSONAL REGARD HELD
FOR HIM BY AMBASSADOR AND US MISSION IN SAIGON AND THEIR VE
Y
GENUINE REGRET AT HIS DEPARTURE.
MARTIN

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